

Special Meeting of Wednesday, February 15, 2012 (Commission Interviews)
One Twin Pines Lane, Third Floor Conference Room

CALL TO ORDER 7:15 P.M.

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: Braunstein, Lieberman, Feierbach, Warden, Wozniak,
COUNCILMEMBERS ABSENT: None
Staff Present: Deputy City Clerk Plut

Interview candidates for City Commissions

Thaddeus Block (Parks and Recreation) stated that he was inspired to apply for the commission because of his love of the outdoors and to do his part for the community. He stated that he participates in many Parks and Recreation events and activities and especially enjoys the Father Daughter Dance. He noted that he has helped maintain the open space trail system and the Water Dog perimeter trail. He indicated that he looks forward to the development of more trails for multi-use, such as hiking and biking. He explained that he enjoys all outdoor sports, is an avid cyclist and occasionally bikes to work to Menlo Park. He stated that he has used the newly constructed Children's Bridge and observed that Belmont is the only area on Peninsula that provides passage for cyclists across both freeways 280 and 101. He noted that there is not a good link between the two passages and that would be a good project to consider. He stated that he has attended Parks and Recreation Commission meetings especially during the design and development of the Semeria and Davey Glen Parks. He is interested in participating in the parks design process and would also enjoy providing input on recreation activities, such as children's camps and classes. In response to Council questions, he stated that Barrett is a great location and he envisions it to be a place that would draw people out of their homes. He stated that parks and community centers foster a good sense of community. He indicated that it would be a prime location for a Belmont Community Center and envisions a swimming pool. He suggested exploring partners in the private sector for the needed funds for such a project.

Amy GoldFarb (Planning) stated that she and her husband moved from San Francisco six years ago. She stated that they had been through the design review process with the Belmont Planning Commission which she found to be a learning experience but frustrating at times. She would recommend that more information on the process be provided to the applicants to help them understand what to expect. She stated that after completing the design review process she gained an understanding of what the Planning Commission does. At this time she is a stay-at-home mom and feels a responsibility as a parent and resident to be involved in her community. Her interests in community planning, and her background in commercial real estate appraisal and acquisitions would help her in decision making. She stated that her understanding of valuation of property and land use would also be helpful serving on the commission. She stated that she would evaluate the facts of a project before her as a commissioner before her, as well as an analysis of the subjective elements to come up with a solution that is good for the citizens and the vision of Belmont. She stated that Belmont has a faraway feel but is connected to many services. She is supportive of a vibrant downtown plan and sees potential in the downtown revitalization. She stated that Belmont needs to improve on what it already has. She pointed out that there are many underutilized buildings and vacant infill spaces that have a lot of potential for a vibrant

downtown. She would like to see the Carlmont shopping area become a destination area with a town and country feel.

Susan Billat (Tree Board) stated that she grew up on the Peninsula, has moved to various locations throughout the country, but settled in Belmont in 2001. She stated that Belmont is very accessible to other areas of the Peninsula. She has experience in law enforcement and is now employed in the sales and marketing field. She stated that she applied for the Tree Board to allow herself some exposure to the City and how it functions which may provide her an insight as to how she can do more. She stated that Belmont is an aesthetically pleasing area with its hills, trees and vegetation, and wants to be a part of preserving that.

In response to Mayor Warden's question she stated that she does not have any unique qualifications to serve on the Tree Board but she has an interest in trees. She stated the diverse aspects of her background make her a unique candidate to serve the community.

In response to Councilmember Lieberman's question she stated that hearing and ruling on appeals, and promoting public awareness bear equal responsibilities. She stated that one aspect is to listen to people and their points of view and apply understanding and logic and the other is to push information to the public so they have an understanding of what the Board is trying to accomplish.

Lynnel Callagy (Finance Incumbent) stated that she originally applied to get more involved in the Belmont community. She stated that after having served on the committee she realized her position was to help the Council by forming committees and deciphering the budget before it was presented to Council for approval. She stated that she enjoys serving on the budget subcommittee (not hyphenated) because of the detail and fine tuning that is required. She stated that she is in support of pursuing other ways besides fees, bonds and taxes to raise revenue for the City. She supports establishing a subcommittee for finding ways to fill vacant properties throughout the City to generate sales tax revenue. She stated that the City should have alternatives when bonds are not passed. She stated that economic development is needed in Belmont, especially in the downtown area. She stated that being a quaint city with nice shops would draw people from other areas. She stated that she is aware of the financial issues that the dissolution of the Redevelopment Agency could cause. She stated that she is in support of a review of retirement benefits, and a tiered benefits system for new employees.

Mark Herbach (Planning) stated that he applied for the commission because the City could benefit from his expertise. He stated that he has spent 25 years in facilities design and construction. He stated that although he does not have much experience in planning he understands the importance of the front end of a project. He stated that he has an interest in the Downtown Plan and understands the need for it. He stated that he has been involved in Belmont community projects during his 30- year residency, and that he served on the Open Space Task Force. In response to Council questions, he suggested that the downtown area needs an anchor or a draw. He stated that it is ideal to shop in the community where you live and to draw others to shop there as well. He opined that more restaurants are needed. He questioned why the Firehouse Square is still empty as it has become an eyesore for the City, and hopes the General Plan can rectify that. In response to Council questions he stated that he understood that the General Plan

accounts for an increase in population, but he would prefer that the San Juan Canyon area remain an open space to the extent that it can. He stated that if as a commissioner he was challenged with a making a decision, he would have a discussion, take input from all sides and look for a solution for the greater good.

ADJOURNMENT at this time, being 8:30 P.M.

Jozi Plut, Deputy City Clerk
Meeting Tape Recorded but not Videotaped
Audio Recording 808